



# MORGAN HILL POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## Vehicle Security

Always secure your vehicle doors, windows, hood and trunk. An unlocked car is an open invitation to a car thief. Lock up whenever you leave your car, and take the keys with you. Never attach a tag with your name and address to a key ring. If the keys are lost or stolen, the tag will lead the thief directly to your car...and your home. When using valet parking, only leave the ignition key with a parking attendant. A dishonest parking lot attendant may have house keys duplicated and sell them, along with your name and address, for a tidy profit. Do the same when you take your car for repairs.

### Suggestions:

- Convert your door lock pins to tapered type pins without a shoulder.
- Close all windows... professional thieves have tools that help unlock cars through a minimum of open space.
- Most new vehicles are equipped with inside hood releases. An after market kit is available for most vehicles to add this feature.
- During daylight hours park in a visible area.
- Avoid leaving an auto unattended in public parking lots for an extended period of time. A car is five times more likely to be stolen from an unattended lot than from the street or an attended lot.
- Whenever possible, turn wheels sharply toward the curb when parking, making it extra difficult for thieves to tow your car.
- If you have a garage, use it.
- Do not leave valuables inside your vehicle, even if your car is locked. Take them with you or keep them in the locked trunk (e.g. cellular phone and the cord, CD's, radio, tape or CD players, purses, briefcases, laptops, and other valuable possessions), out of sight, out of mind.
- Carry the registration and insurance card with you.
- Don't leave personal identification documents or credit cards in your vehicle.

### Adding extra protection will harden the target:

Install a mechanical locking device - commonly called clubs, collars, or j-bars - that lock to the steering wheel, column, or brake to prevent the wheel from being turned more than a few degrees. Use it! These devices make it harder for a thief to steal your car. Investigate security systems if you live in a high-theft area or drive an automobile that's an attractive target for thieves. Adding security measures to your vehicle may qualify you for a discount on your auto insurance.

### Carjacking:

Carjacking - stealing a car by force - has captured headlines in recent years. Statistically, your chances of being a carjacking victim are very slim, and preventative action can reduce the risk even more:

- Approach your car with the key in hand.
- Look around and inside before getting in.
- When driving, keep your car doors locked and windows rolled up at all times.

- Be especially alert at intersections, gas stations, ATMs, shopping malls, convenience and grocery stores - all are windows of opportunities for carjackers.
- Park in well-lit areas with good visibility, close to walkways, stores and people.

If the carjacker has a weapon, give up the car with no questions asked. Your life is worth more than the car.

#### **Beware of the "bump and rob":**

It works like this: A car, usually with a driver and at least one passenger, rear-ends or "bumps" you in traffic. You get out to check the damage. The driver or one of the passengers jumps in your car and drives off. If you are bumped by another car, look around before you get out. Make sure there are other cars around, check out the car that has rear-ended you and who is in it. If the situation makes you uneasy, stay in the car and insist on moving to a police station or busy, well-lit area to exchange information.

#### **Miscellaneous:**

- If your car is stolen, report it to the police immediately. Also, report abandoned cars to the local police agency that handles their removal. It may turn out to be a stolen vehicle. Stolen vehicles are often used in the commission of another crime. Early reporting, along with any vital information you can give, not only aids in the recovery of your vehicle, but also prevents its use for illegal purposes. Record all serial numbers! All too often, victims do not have their serial numbers for police reports.
- Get your Neighborhood Watch group to look out for abandoned and suspicious vehicles and educate residents in preventing vehicle theft.
- Fill in the vital records form for your car and file it away in a safe location. This includes the serial numbers to the stereo system. If it is factory installed, be sure the number is provided to you.
- Install exterior lighting to your home and driveway to enhance visibility during hours of darkness. Motion detectors and photo electric fixtures are recommended.